

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5876

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 22, 2007

Title: An act relating to preventing fish-squish on salmon and steelhead spawning beds.

Brief Description: Protecting salmon and steelhead spawning beds.

Sponsors: Senators Poulsen and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/12/07, 2/22/07 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].
Ways & Means: 2/27/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5876 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Fraser, Hargrove, Poulsen, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Morton, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7346)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Kirstan Arestad (786-7708)

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has various educational programs directed at the public related to salmon and this species life cycle.

DFW's Outreach and Education Services has developed and distributed 30 WILD Salmon Education trunks throughout the state. These trunks offer educational materials that describe DFW's science and work for salmon recovery and geared towards the education of all age groups. The trunks contain slides, videos, and overheads for presentations, games and curriculum that involve arts and crafts with various visual aids and demonstrations. The trunks also contain laminated displays and binders filled with information that are geared to help the public understand policies and practices involved in salmon recovery.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Currently, about 600 schools statewide participate in DFW's Salmon in the Classroom Project. Students receive 500 eggs from a designated hatchery and care for "their" salmon while learning about life histories and habitat requirements. The purpose of the program is to help students become more aware of local waterways and more conscious of and knowledgeable about water quality issues. Students release the salmon as fry after studying the streams and creeks into which the fish will be released.

In the 2006 Supplemental Operating Budget, \$85,000 was appropriated to DFW to produce and distribute educational materials discouraging activities that harm or disturb the spawning beds of salmon and steelhead.

Summary of Bill: DFW must produce educational materials discouraging activities that harm or disturb the spawning beds of salmon and steelhead. Specific activities that must be addressed are listed and include: wading on spawning beds; driving motor vehicles on spawning beds; digging or removing gravel from spawning beds; and using high-powered jet or propeller-driven boats across spawning beds.

The types of educational materials must include brochures to be distributed to persons applying for a fishing or boating license. DFW must also distribute the brochures to retail outlets that cater to outdoor recreation.

DFW must report to the Legislature concerning the effectiveness of this program after a minimum of two spawning cycles have occurred following the initiation of the distribution of the educational materials.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): The title is amended to read: An act relating to preventing fish-squish on salmon and steelhead spawning beds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The intent is to talk about something that never gets talked about: protecting salmon habitat from activities that cause serious damage to salmon redds. Mortality rate on some western rivers for salmon and steelhead eggs and fry is nearly 97 percent. Wading on spawning grounds is destructive and kills salmon eggs and fry, and we have thousands of fisherman wading on spawning grounds every year. Its much like planting a garden and then walking and driving all over it. There has been billions spent on trying to bring these fish back. It doesn't cost anything to not walk on the eggs. The bill could be improved by adding a penalty for people who destroy spawning beds.

Persons Testifying: PRO: John Jovanovich, citizen.